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Statement submitted by International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

Time and again, it has been acknowledged by the United Nations that the benefits of globalization have been one-sided and have benefited a small minority to the detriment of the larger majority. While small pockets of private wealth have grown beyond acceptable limits, an increasing number of people in every country have been marginalized. This development model has proved unhealthy for the sustainability of societies and the planet itself. We need a transformative agenda. This is clear from what we hear in the United Nations conference halls and outside.

For a study done by the members of the International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, indigenous people from Australia, Canada, Ecuador, India, New Zealand and the Philippines were interviewed. This study indicates that the current developmental model has resulted in the dislocation of many of these people and, as towns and cities are built, severed their connections with their land and culture.

The empowerment models they share are experiences of women gaining confidence by developing basic business and farming skills and selling their handicrafts; tribal women becoming more aware of their rights and claiming them with support from one another; women establishing self-help groups and improving maternal health; tribal people using their own herbal remedies and training others in natural health remedies; girls attending school and completing secondary education, which increases their upward social mobility; and finally, more educated indigenous people working in law, health, education and social work to support their own people.

A rights-based approach to development would mean that people have a say in the kind of future they want. "Strategies for empowerment, voices from the grassroots", a survey conducted by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Committee for Social Development with 36 programmes in 19 countries, indicates that programmes that include community members at all levels empower people to become future agents of change in their own community. Poverty eradication and empowerment happen when affected people have the capacity to critique their own reality from a human rights perspective and decide for themselves the kind of future they want. Sustainable communities make for sustainable development. For this they must have their fundamental human needs met.

We recommend:

- Implementation of a universal social protection floor
- Governments that are responsible and accountable to all the people and not controlled by corporations or other vested interest groups
- Greater public sector enterprises
- Regulation of big businesses and implementation of progressive taxation to reduce inequalities
- Participation of local communities in the planning of programmes that affect their economic, political and social lives
- Free, compulsory, quality education for all, including non-formal and adult education
- Promotion and protection of small and community-based enterprises and peoples' cooperatives
- Community participation in the conservation of ecological resources